

# State Representative Sheila Klinker

Helping Hoosier Families

113th Indiana General Assembly, Spring 2004

## Session Report



Job  
Creation



Prescription  
Drugs



Protecting  
Children



# Legislative Session ends a success

Dear Friends,

From afar, it may appear that little was accomplished during the past legislative session. However, upon closer inspection one will find substantive bills that passed.

Let me summarize some of those successes that have been overlooked:

- HB 1438** – I introduced this bill to establish an Enterprise Zone Study Commission to seek new incentives for economic development in brownfield sections, downtown areas, economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods, and locations where factories are struggling to survive. Governor Kernan signed this bill March 12, 2004.
- HB 1320** – The language from my bill (HB 1296) was inserted into HB 1320 and will stabilize community health centers' funding so it would remain consistent and equitable throughout Indiana. HB 1320 also dealt with issues affecting nursing homes and hospitals.
- HB 1365** – HB 1365 contains language from SB 286, which I sponsored in the House, to make Indiana's research and development tax credit permanent as well as enable EDGE tax credits to be claimed by entities wholly or partially owned by an electric cooperative. That provision has attracted 70 high-paying jobs to Indiana that would have been located in a southern state. HB 1365 also extends the Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credit, establishes a new fund to encourage investment in new technology and creates the Emerging Technology Grant Fund to encourage investment in new technology. The legislation also eliminates the sales tax on complimentary hotel rooms and contains language concerning economic development for military bases and certified technology parks.
- HB 1229** – This predatory lending bill will protect homeowners from overpriced loans with unreasonable terms that would force these families into foreclosure of their homes.
- HB 1005** – Creates a study commission to explore local government funding alternatives to property taxes.



Lafayette Police Chief Don Roush and Deputy Chief John Dennis visit the Statehouse to testify on behalf of House Bill 1136.

- HB 1136** – Establishes a Methamphetamine Task Force to stop the rapid growth of the production and use of methamphetamine drugs. LPD Chief Don Roush and Deputy Chief John Dennis testified at the Statehouse on behalf of this bill. (See picture at left.)

- HB 1265** – Sets up programs to allow the state to purchase prescription drugs in bulk at reduced rates from pharmaceutical companies. (See article at lower right).

- SB 296** – Enacted additional tax relief for low-income seniors, veterans, the blind, and the disabled as well as those rehabilitating older homes.

- SB 278** – I sponsored this bill in the House. It provides new methodology in the collection of retail taxes. The legislation should eliminate earlier confusion some retailers had.

There are several other positive bills that succeeded in both chambers and will become law.

I was disappointed that funding for full-day kindergarten did not pass. However, the need for full-day kindergarten was endorsed when the House passed the original bill by a large majority.

Unfortunately, HB 1234, which would have established a study commission to develop information about funding for Full-Day Kindergarten, did not obtain the signatures of the four conferees.

Contrary to various articles describing a "do-nothing session," there were many bipartisan legislative achievements during this past session.

Sincerely,

*Shirley J. Klinker*



Representative Klinker accompanies Governor Joe Kernan as he signs House Bill 1438. Also shown are Dennis Carson, Executive Director of the Lafayette Urban Enterprise Zone (2nd row), and in the front row from left to right, Sen. Earline Rogers, Rep. Larry Buell, and Sen. Frank Mrvan.



# Protecting Hoosier Jobs

**P**rotecting and creating Hoosier jobs and businesses were among the issues of most concern in the 2004 General Assembly. Three bills and a resolution were passed that will aid in the retention and creation of jobs as well as encourage business development and corporate responsibility.

House Resolution 47 calls on the President and Congress to address a growing trade imbalance that has resulted in the loss of more than 2 million manufacturing jobs in the U.S. since 2001.

House Bill 1080 will help **stimulate Indiana's economy** by providing a price preference to Indiana businesses for public works and procurement contracts. This piece of legislation will focus on Indiana companies first as suppliers for goods and services the state is interested in purchasing.

House Bill 1434 will **benefit low-income businesses by fostering economic development opportunities** by providing grants for training and technical assistance. The microenterprise partnership program created under the bill will provide assistance to businesses with fewer than five employees.

House Bill 1365 is a bill that I helped shape through amendments containing language which will build on the economic development initiatives we began through Energize Indiana last year and keep jobs in Indiana.

Among the initiatives which will help streamline our economic recovery efforts are a study of **eliminating corporate tax loopholes in Indiana law** that currently cause tax increases on Hoosier homeowners and businesses, as well as the removal of the complimentary hotel rooms. I have detailed other significant elements of this legislation in the article at left.



Rep. Klinker attends the ceremonial bill signing for House Bill 1365.

## Property Tax Reforms Are Enacted

A significant piece of legislation was passed in House Enrolled Act 1005 regarding property tax reform this session.

This bill requires that people who are buying or refinancing their homes be given property tax deduction and credit information at closing.

It will also require the legislature to explore alternatives for funding local government through a Property Tax Replacement Study Commission, which could be the first step in eliminating our reliance on property taxes in Indiana, in part, or altogether.

Under HEA 1005, counties will also be required to provide a more detailed accounting of how property taxes are being distributed so taxpayers know how their money is being spent.

HEA 1005 also establishes a Local Government Efficiency and Financing Study Commission to evaluate proposals which would transfer the functions of township government to county government to reduce government waste and inefficiency.

Through other legislation, **property tax deductions were also increased for seniors on lower incomes, veterans, the blind and disabled**, as well as those who are rehabilitating their homes.

# Hoosiers Gain Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs

Legislators also worked hard to protect Hoosiers from the rising costs of prescription drugs. Under a plan approved this session, more than **400,000 Hoosiers would gain access to affordable prescription drugs**, with many more qualifying in years to come.

House Bill 1265 enables the state to set up an aggregate prescription drug purchasing program for a certain category of individuals to negotiate the prices

of prescription drugs from pharmaceutical companies. **Indiana will also be able to enter into joint purchasing agreements with other states, gaining added bargaining power.**

People who are eligible for the program will receive the savings when they fill their prescriptions at their local drug-stores. This is intended to be a pilot program which, if successful, will be extended to more people in future.



Representative Klinker speaks at the podium on the House floor.

# Helping Hoosier Families



Representative Klinker visits with Anthony Kennedy Shriver before receiving an award from the Best Buddies program. Shriver founded Best Buddies which is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with physical and mental disabilities.

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## Legislators Address Child Safety Issues

**D**uring the 2004 session, several bills were passed to protect children from abuse and neglect, and keep them safe in automobiles.

•**House Bill 1194** will provide tools to protect children from abuse or neglect. Criminal history checks will be required for each person who resides in a home in which a child is to be placed before the child is placed there. Child Protective Services (CPS) reports may now conclude if abuse or neglect is "indicated," as well as "substantiated" or "unsubstantiated." There will be an additional public disclosure in cases where a child dies as a result of abuse or neglect. A statewide group will be created under the bill to investigate the sudden and/or unexpected deaths of children.

•**House Bill 1245** will levy tougher penalties against people who neglect a child who ends up dying as a result of the crime. The bill will increase the penalty for neglect of a dependent to a Class A felony if the neglect results in the death of a child. Penalties will be increased for con-

tributing to the delinquency of a minor if a person 21 years or older provides alcohol or a controlled substance to a minor, and the consumption of that alcohol or drug is determined to cause a death of any person.

•**Senate Bill 194** will provide added protections for all children in a home where abuses have taken place.

•**House Bill 1098** will require anyone who operates a motor vehicle with a passenger who is less than 8 years of age to place the child in a restraint system. Passengers between 8 and 16 years old will be required to wear a seat belt. Studies have indicated that child restraint systems can help prevent injuries caused when children do not properly fit in a safety belt.

In addition, the bill will create a Child Restraints System Account that will make grants to private and public organizations to purchase and distribute child restraint systems such as booster seats at minimal or no charge.

**Rep. Sheila Klinker**

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